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OO RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEH KI #1351 2361616  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 241616Z AUG 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4668  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001351

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: SITREP 29: KINSHASA UPDATE (8/24 1630 LOCAL TIME)

REF: KINSHASA 1346 AND PREVIOUS

- ¶1. (U) As of 1630 local time, downtown Kinshasa is calm. There have been no reports of gunfire or violence since mid-afternoon as a second day ends without significant security problems.
- ¶2. (U) Crowds that had gathered outside MLC headquarters along Boulevard 30 Juin in anticipation of a press conference by Vice President Bemba have dispersed. Bemba reportedly did not make any statements to the press following his visit to the MLC offices.
- ¶3. (SBU) MONUC security officials told DATT that MONUC troops will begin roving patrols throughout the city -- particularly the downtown area -- later today. The patrols will aim to cover each block in the Gombe area every 20-30 minutes in order to build an awareness of the MONUC presence and to deter potential belligerents from acting. The same officials said MONUC will be retiring its forces currently stationed outside MLC headquarters, but that a company of MONUC troops will be located "within minutes" of the location and on standby to react if necessary. The MLC headquarters location will be included in the coverage area for the roving patrols. MONUC troops will continue to provide security for Bemba at his riverside residence.
- ¶4. (SBU) The directors of Canal Kin TV and Canal Congo TV -- both owned by Bemba -- have appealed to Minister of Information Mova Sakanyi (a member of the PPRD party) to restore the broadcasting signals of the two stations this week. According to Canal Kin's staff, Mova ordered the signals shut down August 20 (following the start of violence that evening) at Binza tower station, which is reportedly guarded by elements of the GSSP. As of 1630 local time, both stations remain off the air.
- ¶5. (U) The Libyan News Agency reported that President Kabila called Libyan leader Mohammad Ghaddafi August 23 to provide an update on the situation in Kinshasa. The news agency reports that Ghaddafi urged Kabila to maintain peace and security, and called on conflicting parties to "adhere to dialogue requirements."
- ¶6. (U) The National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO) released a statement August 22 deploring the recent violence and urging the Congolese to remain calm. In the communique signed by CENCO President Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo, CENCO stated the armed conflict risked driving people towards hatred and vengeance at a time when the country is progressively moving towards the rule of law, reconciliation and peace. CENCO called on Kabila and Bemba to meet together in the interest of the country.

17. (U) ROC President Sassou Nguesso, the president of the African Union, issued a declaration August 22 strongly condemning the violence since August 20. Nguesso called on all parties to bring an end to the violence, urging the political class and the population to work towards preparing for the second round of elections.

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